



# Wyoming Department of Agriculture

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Jim Ceringer, Governor  
Ron Micheli, Director

November 3, 1998

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USDA/FSIS Hearing Clerk  
300 - 12<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Room 102, Cotton Annex  
Washington, D. C. 20250-3700

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Hearing Clerk,

I wish to submit the following comments on Docket No. **98-04SN** (Federal Food Safety Plan).

A national food safety plan that organizes federal food **safety efforts** in a coordinated, targeted way is welcomed by the State of Wyoming. We would like to submit that such a plan should be built on TRUE **partnership** with the states and contain elements that clearly define the roles of each level of government.

Public health, like education, has always been and should continue to be primarily a state/local activity. States are well equipped and practiced at exploring how best to improve food safety, planning food safety programs and carrying them to the streets. The various state programs are even quite adept at coordinating with each other to solve problems that may cross state lines. Cooperation between **states** on the subject of food safety has never been higher. States do need support from the federal government in the areas of imports, research, data collection, and training. We would hope that in developing a true national food safety plan, you will make every effort to include the state agencies as **full** partners. Without strong state involvement in the planning process, your plan may largely be a paper exercise.

The State of Wyoming would like to see a plan that has the federal agencies looking after imports, contracting with states to inspect **firms** involved in interstate commerce, assisting states with laboratory and training support, coordinating and helping states communicate with each other and conducting research to support sound decision making. We do not see the need for additional laws in this **effort**, simply better coordination as well as support for the state programs that are already in place.

A system of strong and active state and local programs knitted together by cooperative and supportive federal agencies is doable, cost effective and efficient.

Sincerely,

*Ron Micheli*

Ron Micheli  
Director of Agriculture

RM/CH/ca

Our mission is to assist the citizens of Wyoming to:

live safe and healthy lives promote and preserve our agricultural community be responsible stewards  
of our natural resources achieve integrity in the market place